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LETTER

TO

The Liberal Electors of Canada

BY

H. H. COOK, ex-M.P.

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H. H. COOK, ex-M.P.

I claim no right and no authority to speak for the Liberal party, nor for Liberals at all; but, as a life-long Liberal and as one who has in the past given of his effort and his means to promote the success of the cause of Liberalism I may, perhaps, be permitted, without arrogance, to claim a right to speak to Liberals, particularly at a time when I believe that plain speaking is needed and under circumstances which render silence almost a betrayal of true Liberal principles. If there be any Liberals who consider party success and the getting and holding of power and office the great and important thing—the only thing worth struggling for—what I am about to say is not for them. I am, on the contrary, addressing myself to those Liberals—and I am persuaded they constitute the vast majority of the rank and file at anyrate, of the party—who are Liberals because they believe in the undying principles of Liberalism, and who regard office and political power only as a means to an end and that end the shaping of the country's policy and the moulding of its laws in accordance with those principles. I would ask these Liberals, whether numerous or only a saving remnant, to consider with me calmly and dispassionately the present condition of the Liberal party and also the question, What is our present duty towards our party and our country?

Under our system of party government it is assumed—and the people have a right to assume—that when a party is intrusted with the reins of government it will faithfully, loyally, and to the utmost of its ability carry out the policies it advocated and fulfil the pledges it made when in Opposition. It will not be disputed, by any honest man at anyrate, that, if a party fails to do this, it is guilty of downright and shameful betrayal of its principles, and becomes unworthy of the support of all honourable men. Indeed it will hardly be held that men can any longer give their support to such a party without sharing in its shame and being guilty of condoning the offence of obtaining and retaining power and office upon false pretences. For eighteen years our party was in Opposition and during those years it criticised the policy and censured many of the acts of the Conservative party then in power. During these eighteen years our party also, sometimes by platforms solemnly adopted in conventions, and at times by the voices of its chosen and recognized leaders and representatives, enunciated policies and made certain definite promises and pledges. Just prior to the general elections in 1896 the party issued, officially, a pamphlet, in which its policy and political principles were set forth, with sufficient detail and exactness. And upon that statement of policy and declaration of principles, and upon the promises and pledges made expressly and by implication, the party asked for and obtained the support of a majority of the electorate, and the leaders of the party were given a mandate by the people to carry out the promised policy and fulfil the pledges and promises made. It is for us, as Liberals, to consider whether or not the leaders of the party have been true to the trust thus and then reposed in them; whether they have honestly and honourably

striven to do the things they promised and to undo those things which the previous Government had done and of which we complained. If we can honestly say they have done so, or if they have fairly endeavoured to fulfil their pledges, then it would be our duty, and our pride and pleasure as well, to give them our heartiest and most loyal support. If, on the other hand, we find ourselves forced to admit that no honest effort has been made to keep their promises; if they have neither carried out nor honestly tried to carry out the policy to which we as a party had pledged ourselves; if, in a word, we find ourselves compelled to own that the charge our opponents are making against us, that our leaders have made of us a party of pledge breakers and betrayers of principle, is true, then we can only avoid sharing in the guilt and dishonour by disassociating ourselves from these leaders, by repudiating them, and by doing all that may be in our power to oust them from the positions which they have obtained by treason to principle. Two sentences taken from the pamphlet I have referred to apply with striking force to us and to our duty at the present juncture. These sentences are "Never mind how you voted twelve, eight, or four years ago; you are not the chattle of any party leader, or the serf of any political organisation." "The man who cannot vote against 'his party' for his country is unworthy of the franchise and unfit for citizenship in a free community."

To charge public men, particularly the leaders of a political party, with deliberate desertion of principle and with shamefully breaking and ignoring their promises and pledges, is a serious thing and one that ought not to be done carelessly or lightly. To make such a charge becomes all the more serious when the one making it is one who was once the associate of these leaders, and is still a member of the party whose principles he charges them with betraying. It is, then, with a full sense of my personal responsibility and with a deep consciousness of the gravity of the charge I am about to make, that I state it as my deliberately formed opinion that the present leaders of the Liberal party, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues in the Cabinet (or at least such of them as were members of the Liberal party when in Opposition), have betrayed the principles of our party, been false to their pledges, and broken faith with the people of Canada. I repeat, I make this charge with a full consciousness of its seriousness, and of the personal responsibility I assume in making it; but I make it, believing that, as one whose efforts, however feeble and humble they may have been, were exerted four years ago, towards putting these men in the positions they occupy and have disgraced, I can only escape from sharing their guilt by thus publicly denouncing and repudiating them. I take this means of doing what I consider my duty because it affords me the opportunity to ask my fellow Liberals whether they can reconcile a further support of men who have betrayed them and deceived the country with their own convictions of what is due to the principles of Liberalism?

I might leave the subject here and ask my fellow Liberals to consider the charge I have made and weigh it against their own knowledge of the political history of the Dominion since the Liberal leaders assumed office. They are intelligent men and reading men, and cannot fail to know that not one principle for which the party stood under the leadership of Brown, Mackenzie, and Blake is now guiding the present leaders of the party. Neither can they fail to know that no honest effort has been made to fulfil the pledges and promises made by these men when asking the support of the electorate. But I feel that the gravity of the charge I make and the personal responsibility attaching to one who undertakes to publicly make such a charge, requires that I adduce proofs in support of the accusation. I am the more convinced that I ought to do this, because one of the members of

the Cabinet has recently had the temerity to claim, publicly, that every pledge and promise made by them prior to the last general election has been redeemed.

As briefly as I can and as may be consistent with clearness, I will, then, consider what were the main principles and the principal pledges proclaimed and made and how far these have been lived up to?

One of the political principles which has been most dear to Liberals is that the independence of Parliament should be scrupulously guarded. As a party we have maintained that it is inimical to honest legislation and fatal to all individual independence among members of Parliament, that the Government of the day should be allowed to give or promise offices of emolument to members, either as a reward for support already given or as an inducement to give support in the future. Mr. Blake voiced the views of the party on this and in the very last session of the last Parliament, the present Postmaster-General, with the support of the representatives of the party in the House, embodied the principle in a measure which he offered for the acceptance of Parliament. This bill provided that no member should be eligible for any office or position of emolument in the gift of the Crown, during the existence of the Parliament of which he was a member or until one year after the dissolution of the House. Speaking in support of his measure, Mr. Mulock indulged in strong condemnation of the Conservative Government for having taken members from their places in Parliament and put them in positions of emolument. Speaking generally of the viciousness of the practice he condemned and to put an end to which his measure was designed, Mr. Mulock said—See Hansard, 1896, page 2375 :—"If the Government can dangle public offices before their followers and induce a few, perhaps an increasing number, to aspire to these positions instead of representing their constituents here, and exercising an unbiased judgment and a wholesome influence upon the Administration of the day, they becomes mere parasites upon the Administration and cease to voice the opinion of their constituents; not only that, but moving among their colleagues they become corrupting agencies within their own ranks." He declared the practice to be disgraceful, and calculated to lower the tone of public life, and to fill it with office-seekers and place-hunters. All the Liberal leaders and members supported Mr. Mulock, and strong speeches were made in advocacy of his measure. This was as it should have been, for the measure was an embodiment of one of the most cherished principles of Liberalism. It was one of the principles to which the party was pledged, which the people had a right to expect us to stand by, and to carry out which they entrusted us with the reigns of government. How have our leaders fulfilled this promise to the electorate ?

During the many years that the Conservative party was in power, and up to the time when Mr. Mulock introduced his measure, up to the time when he and others made their strongly-condemnatory speeches, seventeen members of Parliament had been appointed to office. During the four years the present Government has been in power, thirteen members have been so appointed to offices, with salaries aggregating $39,000 per year. So great was the indecent haste of the present Premier to give the lie to his previous professions and to stultify his party on this principle of the independence of Parliament, that, on the 8th July, 1896, he wrote to Mr. Francois Langelier, the member for Quebec, these shameless words :—"This is what I propose: The position of Lieutenant-Governor will be at our disposition at the end of 1897, and, if from now till that time you are not appointed judge, I propose to place the Lieutenant-Governorship at your disposal." Later,

he wrote to Mr. Langelier's brother, asking him to "tell Francois that I do not wish there should be any misunderstanding; I wish that my promise may be considered sacred." Mr. Langelier sat and voted in Parliament for two sessions with this promise in his pocket, "a mere parasite upon the Administration," "moving about among his colleagues, a corrupting agency within their own ranks," to use the forcefully descriptive language of Mr. Mulock. At the end of that time Sir Wilfrid's "sacred promise" was fulfilled, and Mr. Langelier became a judge with a salary of $5,000 per year. So debasing has been the Government's attitude and example in this matter that recently one of their supporters, in a letter addressed to the Liberal Association of his constituency, brazenly told them in effect that should they renominate him he would, if re-elected, look upon his seat in Parliament as a stepping-stone to an office of emolument, only stipulating that the office should carry with it "an adequate salary." Surely Mr. Mulock was prophetic when he said that "the electorate, noticing these things, are coming to the conclusion that the highest aim a man can have in seeking public life is that he may, through Parliament, find his way into a comfortable position for life." And surely honest Liberals ought not to forgive or refrain from punishing the false leaders who have on this question of the absolute independence of Parliament lowered the banner of Liberalism and dragged it in the dirt. Mr. Langelier's case is not an isolated one, others equally discreditable might be named. It is even charged now that there are in the present Parliament a number of members who have been sitting and voting with promises of judgeships and other offices in their pockets. This charge may not be well founded. It is to be hoped that it is not. But is it not humiliating to reflect that the conduct of our leaders has been such that a charge like this, involving ineffable disgrace to our party, can be made with an evidently confident expectation that it will be believed ?

Among the solemn declarations of principle made by the National Liberal convention at Ottawa in June, 1893, was the following bearing upon the principle of the independence of Parliament :—

"That it is the ancient and undoubted right of the House of Commons to enquire into all matters of public expenditure, and into all charges of misconduct in office against Ministers of the Crown, and the reference of such matters to royal commissions created upon the advice of the accused is at variance with the due responsibility of Ministers to the House of Commons, and tends to weaken the authority of the House over the Executive Government, and this convention affirms that the powers of the people's representatives in this regard should on all fitting occasions be upheld."

This was the declared belief of the Liberal party then. I believe it to be the belief of all true Liberals still. The making of such a declaration implied a promise to the people, which, as a party, we cannot ignore, much less repudiate, without being chargeable with falsehood and dishonour. How have our party leaders dealt with that promise ?

On June 27th, 1899, Sir Hibbert Tupper, in his place in Parliament, made a series of distinct charges, twenty-seven in all, alleging incapacity, misconduct, corruption, and malfeasance in connection with the management of the affairs of the Yukon by the Department of the Interior. In a number of these charges Hon. Clifford Sifton, the Minister of the Interior, was accused of personal wrong-doing of the gravest character, and all of the charges reflected upon his character and conduct, either as a man or as a Minister. I shall n here discuss whether these charges were true or not. Three Liberal members appear to have believed that some of them at any rate were true, but this is not the question I wish to discuss. To us, as Liberals, the important question is: Did our party and its leaders meet and deal with these charges as a Liberal Government ought to have met and dealt with them ? Were they

met and dealt with in the manner which we, as a party, had declared by a solemnly-made affirmation that such charges should be, and as we had pledged ourselves to deal with such charges? Did the Liberal leaders assert "the ancient and undoubted right of the House of Commons to enquire into ..... all charges of misconduct in office against Ministers of the Crown"? On the contrary, the accused Minister, backed by his colleagues, positively refused to grant a judicial commission of enquiry, and this, although the member who brought the charge offered to abide by the result of the investigation, and, in the event of his failure to substantiate his charges, to forfeit his right to sit in Parliament, or to hold any office in the gift of the Crown. More, and perhaps worse, than this, notwithstanding the solemn condemnation of the practice of referring charges against Ministers "to royal commissions created upon the advice of the accused," the Government entrusted the duty of "investigating" the charges to one of their own officials, an employe of the department he was instructed to investigate, and a relative by marriage of the accused Minister. As if to make certain that even this not unfriendly investigator should not be able to make any unpleasant discoveries, such restrictions and difficulties were imposed upon him and upon those who might be called upon to give evidence that the commissioner was compelled to acknowledge in his report that his investigation was incomplete. Can we, in the face of these facts, deny that the leaders of our party, the men for whose conduct we shall rightly be held responsible unless we repudiate it, and them, have falsified the pledge given to the people to preserve and maintain the independence of Parliament?

Perhaps the most definite and positive promise made by our party to the electorate was that the public debt should be at any rate not increased, and that the annual expenditure of the Dominion should be materially reduced. This was a distinct promise; not something which might be hoped, but positively and definitely made by the convention that defined our party policy, and reasserted over and over again by our leaders. Here is the promise as made by the convention:—

"We cannot but view with alarm the large increase of the public debt, and of the controllable annual expenditure of the Dominion, and the consequent undue taxation of the people under the Governments that have been continuously in power since 1878, and we demand the strictest economy in the administration of the government of the country."

Not to speak of statements made by other prominent and leading men of the party, for whose utterances we could hardly escape responsibility, I will give a few extracts from speeches made in amplification of this promise by members of the present Government prior to the last general election:—

Sir Wilfrid Laurier said:—"If we get into power we will follow the example of Mr. Mackenzie, and I will say that although we may not be able to bring the expenditure to what it was under him, we can reduce the amount two, yes, three, millions of dollars per year."

Sir Louis Davies thus understood and defined the promise made by the Liberal party:—"The Liberal party says that several millions may be lopped off the present expenditure without injury to the public service."

Hon. David Mills declared that he had "no doubt that the efficiency of the public service might be increased, and the expenditure reduced by almost one-half."

Hon. William Patterson said: "We are taking $6,115,000 more in taxes out of the people than we should, and we spend $7,571,000 more than we should."

Sir Richard Cartwright said: "I say that it is a disgrace and a shame to the Government that have been entrusted with our affairs that they come down to us and ask for an expenditure of $38,000,000 a year for federal purposes. Sir, the thing is utterly unjustifiable."

Hon. William Mulock was equally emphatic. "There is nothing to warrant this enormous expenditure of nearly $38,000,000, except the fact that we are burdened down with debt, and with office-holders, great and small."

The controllable annual expenditure during the last four years of the Conservative Administration was as follows:—

1893	$ 36,814,052
1894	37,585,025
1895	38,132,005
1896	36,949,142

an average expenditure yearly of $37,370,056. During the whole time they were in office the yearly expenditure averaged $33,535,549. This was the expenditure which, by solemnly adopted resolution, we condemned. It was to this expenditure that the language I have quoted was applied. How have our promises and the pledges of our leaders been fulfilled? What we and they intended the electorate to understand was that if they placed our party in power the public expenditure should be reduced. This was our contract and agreement with them. What has happened? The controllable annual expenditure under the present Government has been:

1897	$ 38,349,759
1898	38,532,525
1899	41,903,500
1900	43,175,000

an average of $40,565,196 yearly, greater by $3,195,140 than the average during the last four years of the Conservative Administration, or $7,029,647 more per year than our opponents spent on an average during their eighteen years of power. The average total yearly expenditure since the Liberal Government came into power has been $46,616,623, as against a yearly average under Conservative rule of $42,335,881. That is, instead of the promised decrease of from two to five millions, there has been an increase of more than four and a quarter millions yearly.

An attempt has been made to make it appear that what was objected to as extravagant was the expenditure of $38,132,005 during a particular year. In his speech delivered in Toronto on August 24, 1899, Sir Richard Cartwright took this position, and as they have issued this speech as a campaign pamphlet (Political Pointers No. 1), the Government may be fairly assumed to have adopted his defence. Sir Richard's defence amounts to this: The expenditure of 38 or 37 millions in 1896 was too great under the then existing conditions. Here are his words: "In 1896, when the Liberal party objected, and with good cause, to the great expenditure, I doubt if since Canada became a nation, if since the period of Confederation, there was ever a time when there was such a need for economy as there was in that year." Unfortunately for such a defence as this, the complaint of extravagant expenditure and our promises had no reference to the year 1896. The resolution I have quoted was adopted at Ottawa in 1893. The remarks of Sir Louis Davies were made in 1893. It was in 1889 that Mr. Mills said that the expenditure could be cut in two without impairing the efficiency of the public service. Mr. Mulock spoke in 1895, and Mr. Patterson in 1890. It simply is not true that our complaint was because of an expenditure in any one year. What we desired the electorate to believe was that the late Government were spending several millions more per year than the necessities of the public service required, and our promise was that, if placed in power, we would, to quote the language of Mr. Charlton, "at once reduce the public expenditure and effect other savings to the extent of five million dollars per annum without impairing the efficiency of the service." Mr. Charlton spoke in 1893, and it is reasonable to suppose that a gentleman of his grasp and ability did not mistake the meaning of the declaration of the platform, nor misunderstand the promise it was meant to convey.

At the time the Mackenzie Government went out of power the net debt of the Dominion was $140,000,000. When the late Conservative Government went

out of office it had risen to $258,497,432. This increase we, as a party, condemned, "viewed it with alarm," to use the language chosen by our convention to express our attitude regarding it. It is useless for us to pretend that we did not wish and expect the electorate to believe that, if entrusted with the management of public affairs, we would at least not increase this debt, already, as we contended, too large. Such a pretence would neither deceive others nor ourselves. In the pamphlet to which I have already referred, among a number of "Reasons why the Liberal party should be entrusted with the administration of the Government of Canada" is the following: "Because the Liberal party again placed in power will stop the increase of the public debt and commence its reduction as quickly and as rapidly as possible." Yet in the face of this distinct and solemn promise the present Government have actually increased the public debt by not less than $6,458,000. I take the figures from the statement of Sir Richard Cartwright. Can we, as a party, deny that in this matter of the public debt and public expenditure our pledges and promises have been broken; shamefully, disgracefully broken? And remember that even while admitting that the public debt has been added to, the Government claim that they have been in receipt of revenues exceeding those enjoyed by their predecessors by many millions of dollars. Here again are Sir Richard Cartwright's words: "Our gross income for 1899 will be forty-six millions at least, as against thirty-four millions in 1895." So that not only have the Government to confess that they have broken the party's pledge not to increase the public debt, but they have increased it despite the fact that they were in receipt and enjoyment of enormously increased revenues. How can we, as a party, hope to ever again enjoy the confidence and respect of the people at large if we allow our leaders to thus brazenly break our solemn pledges and promises, without rebuke at our hands? Is it to be supposed that a people so intelligent as ours will not consider this increased expenditure and added debt in the light of the charge we made against our opponents of corruption and malfeasance? Here is the charge as made by the Ottawa convention: "The convention deplores the gross corruption in the management and expenditure of public moneys, which for years past has existed under the rule of the Conservative party." Is it to be supposed that an intelligent and thoughtful people reading such a charge and then reflecting that our present leaders are expending far more public money for practically the same public service will ask themselves the question, "Were these charges of corruption true?" and, if they were, must there not be either greater corruption or almost unthinkable mismanagement now? But serious as such a reflection upon either the truthfulness or honesty of our leaders is, it is trifling when compared with the charge, which can neither be denied nor explained away, that they have deliberately and flagrantly deceived the public, and broken the solemn pledges they gave for the purpose of obtaining office and power. Let me again repeat, for it cannot be too often or too strongly insisted upon, that unless we of the rank and file of the party clear ourselves of complicity in their criminality by repudiating our forsworn leaders, we must be content to be held to be consenting parties to the shameful deception which has been practised upon the people of Canada.

Along with the promise that the public expenditure should be substantially reduced, and that the public debt should not be increased, another pledge was given, namely, that the burden of taxation should be lightened. The "undue taxation of the people" was what our platform condemned. "We are the party of low taxation," was the emphatic declaration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Mr. Mills said, "We are asking for a reduction of taxation." Sir Richard Cartwright, ever emphatic, declared, "These villainous Customs taxes are impoverishing and ruining our people." All this amounted to a distinct

pledge, that, if placed in power, our party would reduce the burden of the taxation of the people. Has this promise been fulfilled?

During the last three years of Conservative rule the total Customs and Excise duties i.e., the taxation of the people, amounted to $81,598,953. During the three years of Liberal rule these taxes have totalled $94,477,179, or an increase of $12,878,226 instead of the promised reduction. An attempt has been made to explain this increase away by saying that the population has increased in the meantime, and that the increased total receipts from Customs and excise is due to this. Unfortunately for this excuse, it is not borne out by the Government's own official returns. In the trade and navigation returns the percentage of taxation per head of the population is figured out and the figures show that the taxation per head has increased since the present Government came into power. More than that, the figures show that, while under Conservative rule, between 1892 and 1896, the taxation in proportion to population had decreased by $1.12 per head, since the advent of the present Government instead of the promised reduction there has actually been an increase of $1.16 per head, or $5.80 per family. Can we, with any expectation of being believed, pretend, in the face of these facts, that our promise to reduce the burden of taxation has been fulfilled, or that any honest attempt has been made to fulfil it? If Hon. Mr. Patterson, who says all our pledges have been redeemed, was speaking truthfully when he said that $6,115,000 was being needlessly taxed out of the people, then the people must be needlessly taxed now to the tune of $13,077,324 annually. Unless he was then engaged in an attempt to deceive the people the expenditure which he said was too great by $7,571,000 then is $16,583,635 too great now.

The protective tariff and the whole system and principle of protection was denounced in our platform, and we positively pledged ourselves to repeal it. Upon no question were our leaders, the members of the present Government, more clear and emphatic than on this. At the Ottawa convention Sir Wilfrid Laurier declared :—"The servile copy of the American system brought amongst us by the Conservatives is, like its prototype, a fraud and a robbery, and I call upon you, one and all, to pronounce at once, and give your emphatic support to the proposition that we shall never rest until we have wiped away from our system that fraud and robbery under which Canadians suffer." On another occasion he said :—"I will not be satisfied until the last vestige of protection has been removed from the soil of Canada. Our great reform is to put away from the soil of Canada the last vestige of protection." Once again he said :—"Call it protection, call it feudalism, call it slavery, I care not, it is the same thing. It differs only in degree, it is bondage." Sir Richard Cartwright denounced protection as "nothing more nor less than a deliberate, legalized and organized roberry," and "the very highroad to political slavery first, and industrial slavery afterwards." "Our policy from first to last," Sir Richard declared, "has been to destroy the villainous system of protection by free trade, a revenue tariff, or Continental free trade." Speaking at the Ottawa convention, Sir Wilfrid Laurier said :—"We will relieve the people of protection, which is a fraud, a delusion, and a robbery." and again :—"Let it be well understood then that from this moment we have a distinct issue with the party in power. Their ideal is protection; our ideal is free trade; their immediate object is protection; ours a tariff for revenue and for revenue only. Upon this issue we engage in battle." In the platform of principles adopted at Ottawa are these words :—"We denounce the principle of protection as radically unsound and unjust to the masses of the people." On that platform, as in the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier last quoted, the issue between the two parties is declared to be "clearly defined," and our tariff plank ends with this solemn, definite, clear-cut declara-

tion :—"This issue we unhesitatingly accept, and upon it we await with the fullest confidence the verdict of the electors of Canada." Pages of the official pamphlet to which I have refered are filled with arguments in favour of free trade, and in opposition to protection. But I need not dwell longer upon this. No Liberal who cares to preserve a decent reputation for candour and truthfulness will attempt to deny that our party, when appealing for the support of the electorate, made a solemn promise that, if entrusted with power, we would at once abolish the system of protection. I notice that the Premier is credited by the newspapers with having said, in the course of a recent address, that he and his party never promised free trade. I am not willing to believe that he has been reported with absolute accuracy, for such a statement by him would evidence a recklessness of utterance and a contempt for the understanding and intelligence of his audience such as I would not like to believe any public man could be guilty of and entertain.

No statements could be plainer; no promises more explicit than our pre-election ones on this question. Yet with shame and humiliation we must confess that they have been thrown to the winds. When the new Finance Minister made his first budget speech, and brought down his first proposals for tariff changes, there did seem to be something like evidence of an honest intention to carry out the promises so solemnly made; but that tariff was withdrawn and another substituted, in which there was not the faintest evidence of any intention or desire to depart from the protective principle which had been the avowed central idea of the tariffs of successive Conservative Ministers of Finance. So far was the new tariff from being an attempt to "put away from the soil of Canada the last vestige of protection," as Sir Wilfrid Laurier had so loudly promised to do, so far was it from being an effort to "relieve the people of protection," that the Hon. Mr. Tarte felt himself justified in assuring the protected manufacturers that, "while the present Government has found itself obliged to make many changes for the sake of a removal of anomalies, and for other reasons, they have taken care that the tariff shall remain sufficiently high to afford ample protection to Canadian industries." Did any Conservtive Minister ever offer or promise more since Sir John Macdonald, in 1881, first announced his policy of "ample protection to Canadian industries"? Mr. Tarte went on: "I say that the grand principle of the tariff as it exists to-day will remain unchanged. We shall make slight alterations as it may seem to us that they are needed, but the tariff as a whole will stay as it is at present." I am not quarrelling with Mr. Tarte or blaming him. Not being a Liberal, he was not bound by our promises and pledges. He had no part in making them and his repudiation of free trade and declaration of adherence to the principle of protection involves neither treachery nor dishonour on his part. But we who made the promises and pledges have to deal with the fact that Mr. Tarte's statements have never been repudiated nor disavowed by his Ministerial colleagues, the leaders of our party, and we cannot deny that the Government and the Liberal party have thus become responsible for them. Hon. Mr. Sifton, too, has spoken for his colleagues and the party on this subject. Here are his words:—"The tariff is a question that is settled, and is now a dead issue, because the Liberals have succeeded in solving this great question, and the tariff is one which our opponents, if they get a chance, would not change very much." What a humiliating, what a contemptible position are we thus placed in by our leaders. If we advance in the direction of free trade we break the promises which Messrs. Tarte and Sifton have been permitted, perhaps commissioned, to make; if we do not we will be recreant to all the past professions and pledges of our party.

I know that attempts have been made to make it appear that the tariff has been amended in the direction of free trade, and one Minister, Hon. William Patterson, has even had the boldness to claim that all our pledges have been fulfilled to the letter; a statement more indicative of courage than honesty. Unfortunately for this contention, the trade and navigation returns, which are authoritative, contradict it flatly. These returns show that the percentage of duties collected upon goods entered for home consumption is only 1.58 per cent. lower than it was when the late Government was in power, and if a proper allowance were made for American corn, which appears in the returns as imported free for home consumption, while a great part of it is reshipped abroad, the entire decrease would be less than one per cent. When we come to examine the tariff in detail, the evidence of treachery to past promises becomes yet more startling. We promised free agricultural implements; the duty remains as before. We promised free coal oil; we have reduced the duty one cent per gallon. We promised free cottons; the duty on grey cotton has been raised from 22 1-2 per cent. to 35 per cent., on prints from 30 to 35 per cent., and on sewing cotton from 12 1-2 to 15 per cent. It is simply idle to pretend that our tariff promises have been kept, or that any honest or serious attempt has been made to keep them. And once more let me say that only by repudiating our pledge-breaking leaders, and by assisting to bring them to merited punishment can we, the rank and file of the party, avoid a guilty participation in their flagrant offence against political decency.

Just before the last general election, speaking for the party as he had a right to do, Sir Wilfrid Laurier made a distinct statement of policy, looking to the securing of mutual preferential trade between Canada and Great Britain. He declared that the time was ripe to obtain this boon, that Mr. Chamberlain had come to the conclusion that the time had arrived when it was possible for Great Britain to give to the colonies a preference for their products over the products of other nations. Sir Wilfrid made a solemn promise that if successful at the then approaching elections he would "send commissioners to London to arrange for a basis of preferential trade." How has this promise been kept? Has any honest effort been made to redeem it? Why, one member of the Ministry, speaking for his colleagues, has declared that the very idea that such a preference could be obtained by us is "arrant humbug." A preferential advantage has been given the manufacturers of Great Britain in our markets, whether wisely or not, I shall not argue. But this one-sided arrangement is not what Sir Wilfrid promised to endeavour to obtain; not what he pledged himself to "send commissioners to London" to arrange for. There was no material difference in the declared policies of the two parties on this question prior to the general election. Both leaders professed to aim at the same thing, and that the securing for Canadian producers, particularly Canadian agriculturists, a tariff advantage in the British markets, as compared with their foreign competitors. There has since been no change in the attitude of the Conservative party, and yet our leaders have led us into a position of positive hostility to what both parties favoured prior to the elections and which our opponents still favour. They still stand for preferential treatment for our farmers in the British markets; our leaders declare such a proposal to be "arrant humbug." Speaking, prior to the election, of the advantages of the arrangement he had promised to "send commissioners to London" to negotiate for, Sir Wilfrid Laurier said:—"We sell our goods in England. We send our wheat, our butter, our cheese, all our natural products, but there we have to compete with similar products from the United States, from Russia, and from other nations. Just

see what a great advantage it would be to Canada if the wheat, cheese, and butter, which we send to England, should be met in England with a preference over similar products of other nations. The possibilities are immense." Was all this "arrant humbug?" Can we pretend, and can we expect to be believed if we do pretend, that the one-sided preference we have given to British producers in our markets bears even a decent resemblance to the mutual preference whose advantages were so glowingly pictured by Sir Wilfrid? The advantages of the one were declared to be immense; it would take a microscope to detect any advantage to the Canadian farmers in the other. What are we to say, as Liberals, if we be asked, What of your party's promise to work for the securing of preferential treatment in the British markets? What answer shall we make if we be asked concerning those commissioners that were to be sent to London? Shall it be said of the rank and file of the Liberal party that they contentedly allowed their leaders to make of them a party that regards pre-election pledges as a joke, and a permissible way of cozening the electors?

There could hardly be a more flagrant case of deliberate deception than the action of our present leaders upon the prohibition plebiscite. At the convention of 1893 a resolution in favour of a prohibitory liquor law was offered by Mr. F. S. Spence. Speaking upon this question, and upon what ought to be the attitude of the Liberal party toward it, Sir Wilfrid Laurier took the ground that no definite policy could well or properly be declared until the Royal Commission, then investigating the subject, had completed its work, and made its report. The convention, however, took the view that the wish of the people should be ascertained by means of a plebiscite, and the following resolution was passed :—

"Whereas public attention is at present much directed to a consideration of the admittedly great evils of intemperance, it is desirable that the mind of the people should be clearly ascertained on the question of prohibition, by means of a Dominion plebiscite."

I do not think there is a single intelligent man who will think, or an honest man who will say, that the plain meaning of this resolution, the meaning that it was intended and expected that the electorate would attach to it, was neither more nor less than this: That if the plebiscite should show a clear majority of the votes polled in favour of prohibition, then we pledged ourselves to introduce and carry a prohibitory liquor law. As the report of the convention shows, this was the meaning attached to it by Hon. T. W. Anglin, who, himself opposed to prohibition, argued against the adoption of the resolution because, as he contended, if there should be a majority for prohibition when the vote was taken, "the friends of prohibition will be in a position to call upon the Liberal party to follow up this resolution logically by assisting in the passage and enforcement of a prohibitory liquor law." As the Globe's report shows, "the resolution was put and carried, with a mighty shout of 'aye' against a few feeble 'noes.'" During the campaign which preceded the last general election our leaders appealed for, and, as a matter of fact, received, a large measure of temperance support on the ground that the Liberal party were taking "a practical step, the first serious step that is to be taken if prohibition is to become law," to use the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The vote was taken at a great direct expense to the country and perhaps at a much greater expense to those who supported and opposed what both sides were led to believe and assuredly did believe to be the initial step towards the enactment of a prohibitory liquor law. The majority throughout the Dominion was over twelve

thousand; yet instead of carrying out their promise, the Ministry took refuge behind the plea that it was necessary that there should be a majority, not of the votes polled, but of the whole electorate. Worse still, the Premier was so lost to shame as to admit that there had been a secret (he calls it an "implied") agreement among the opponents and supporters of prohibition in the convention to this effect. This statement can only be believed by those who are prepared to think that the temperance leaders within the party, including the present Minister of Agriculture and the Premier of Ontario, were consenting parties to one of the most despicable pieces of trickery that ever disgraced politics. If any such agreement was made, it involved this: that the temperance people were to do what had never been done by a political party; a thing practically impossible, poll a majority of the whole electorate. For the temperance leaders to agree to such a proposition would be to be guilty of almost inconceivable treachery to those who trusted them, for they could not have helped knowing that it would be simply impossible to get a majority of the whole electorate on any proposition. Certainly the opponents of prohibition had no knowledge of any such agreement, else they would not have taken the trouble and gone to the expense they did to roll up a vote against prohibition, when all that was needed was to stay at home. It is not possible to believe that Hon. G. W. Ross, for example, knew of such an agreement or was a party to it, for he is on record as declaring, when once it was proposed to amend the Canada Temperance Act, so as to require a majority vote of the whole electorate to enact it in any municipality, that such a condition would "take an unfair advantage of public opinion and render it almost impossible for public opinion to be fairly recorded." Why, at the general election Sir Wilfrid Laurier himself polled 470 votes less than a majority of the electorate in his constituency, and the nine members of the present Ministry who were elected in 1896 fell short of an actual majority of the electorate in their ridings by 4,170. Yet Sir Wilfrid and his colleagues had no hesitancy or prickings of conscience about accepting their minority of the votes as an ample evidence of the will of the electorate. But if we assume that Sir Wilfrid was candid and truthful when he told of that "implied" agreement; assuming that the Liberal temperance men in the convention did—as he in effect charges them with doing—enter into a conspiracy to humbug the temperance people, does this make the position of our leaders any better, or does it lessen in any degree our duty to stamp with our disapproval men who put forward as an excuse for being false to their public pledge the astonishing plea that they had all along been determined to be false to it, and that they had, in fact, conspired with others so as to make it safe for them to be false to it?

It would be utterly wearisome to review in detail all the ugly record of promises made and broken by the present Government. I can only glance at some of those not already noted. We declared that the number of paid Ministers in the Cabinet was too great under the late Administration; we have the same number still and their aggregate salaries are $4,000 per year greater, one-half this sum going into the pocket of the Minister who recently declared that every pledge has been kept. We denounced the expenditure on account of superannuation and pledged ourselves to wipe it out; it was greater by $14,331 in 1899 than it was in 1896. We denounced as useless the creation of the Department of Trade and Commerce. The "useless" department has been continued. We promised to abolish the Senate or radically change its constitution; by affording that body an opportunity to save the country from the consequences of extravagant and corrupt deals, the Government has enabled the Senate to demonstrate its usefulness, almost its indispensability. We denounced the development of monopolies, trusts, and

combines as a consequence of the policy of our opponents; not a single one of those which were in existence in 1896 has been destroyed or put out of business, while others have been created and given a foothold in the country by the direct action of the Government. We declared that the expenditure for the administration of justice was too great, Sir Wilfrid Laurier even going so far as to say that thousands of dollars paid to counsel had been improperly if not corruptly paid; the expenditure of this department has been increased by $353,000. We denounced the expenditure of $120,000 for immigration purposes; we have more than doubled this expenditure, increasing it to $255,000. We condemned the granting of public lands as bonuses to railways; only by the opposition of the Senate was the Government prevented from consummating a deal by which twenty-five thousand acres of gold-bearing lands, to be selected by the beneficiaries, was to be given per mile for the building of a narrow-guage tramway, a transaction so flagrantly improper that several Government supporters refused to vote for it, and it is doubtful if anyone would now be willing to defend it on its merits. We denounced the granting of cash bonuses to railways, declaring it to be "a fruitful source of jobbery, peculation, and corruption"; we have well nigh out-Heroded Herod by the reckless way in which we have granted cash bonuses to railways, giving in one instance for the same railway two millions more than we had condemned our opponents for offering, and in another actually granting a bonus to a road for which no charter had been granted and which was not even projected. We condemned all corruption; yet our leaders have made us responsible for the Crow's Nest job, by means of which the directors of the leading Government organ were permitted to practically grab a quarter of a million of acres of coal lands, and the country is saddled with a totally unnecessary payment of two millions of dollars. We promised purity of administration; the history of the notorious Drummond railway job shows what regard our leaders had for such a promise.

But why go farther? The record of our party while it has been in power under its present leaders is one long, shameful story of promises unfulfilled and pledges broken; of reckless extravagance; of jobbery and corruption; and of utterly disgraceful betrayal of every principle for which as a party we have stood. For the purpose of securing themselves in office the men who have been entrusted with positions of leadership have brought disgrace upon our party and dishonour upon the name of Liberalism. What then is our duty to our party and to our country? Again I repeat that only by repudiating these leaders, by disassociating ourselves from them, and by doing all that may be in our power to punish them for their falseness and treachery, by driving them from power and from the offices which they retain as the price of their treason to principle, can we as individuals and as a party avoid sharing their guilt and participating in their shame. In no other way and by no means short of this can we hope to regain or retain as a party the respect and confidence of a patriotic and decency-loving public. It may be said that this can only be accomplished at the expense of a return to power of our political opponents; a party opposed to the political principles in which we believe. I do not dispute this, nor do I shrink from this alternative. Neither do I believe that any true man or any man who has an abiding faith in the truth of Liberal principles or in the ultimate triumph of truth will shrink from it. We are bound to assume that the Conservative party is permeated and guided by a genuine belief in the truth of its political ideals and in the correctness of its principles. At any rate we cannot truthfully charge that party or its leaders with having betrayed or abandoned its principles to get or retain office. This much we must say in fairness even if we cannot see eye to eye with them. At the most, then, the defeat of the

present Government would only mean loss of office to men whose holding of it is a disgrace and a scandal; it would involve no defeat of the principles of Liberalism; no rejection of those principles by the men whose votes would bring about the Government's overthrow. On the other hand for us to overlook and condone the treachery and desertion of principle of which our leaders have been guilty would not only be a deliberate decision on our part to make ourselves and our party partakers of their crimes against political decency, but it would mean putting a premium upon falsehood, promise-breaking, and treachery to principle, and a recognition of these as legitimate weapons of political warfare; a prospect from which every decency-loving Canadian must recoil with horror.

If the Liberal party be what we have believed it to be, a great force for political good in this Dominion; if its principles be founded, as we have believed, upon ethical and economic truth, we need not fear that it will be permanently weakened by rescuing it from the leadership of men who have been false to all their professions, recreant to all their pledges, and who recognize in our party nothing more or better than a machine to keep them in office. The overthrow and punishment of the leaders who have betrayed and disgraced us is the important present duty to which we must put our hands and do with all our might. That done we may again look the world in the face, for we shall have vindicated our party and proved our right to claim for ourselves the highest earthly title—honest men. We will then be able once more to advocate those political ideals in which we have believed, and once more to ask the public to believe us when we promise to stand by those ideals. This will involve a reorganization of the party, it may be objected. Doubtless, but if we must choose between reorganization and the infamy, the degradation, of being justly regarded as a party of pledge-breakers, willingly led by a cabal of place-holders who have proven recreant to every principle they ever professed, I do not think honest men will hesitate long before making their decision. As I have already said, I am not addressing myself to any within the Liberal ranks, who regard the getting and holding of power and office as the proper end and aim of all political effort. I am trying to speak only to those who are and have been Liberals because of their sincere belief in the principles of Liberalism. I have made no statement which is not fully warranted by the facts. If I have spoken strongly it is because this is a time for plain speaking and for strong speaking, and my only regret is that I am not able to command the language needed to fittingly characterize the conduct of men who betrayed a great party and a great cause for the paltry consideration of offices and empty titles. To the great body of honest Liberals—a large majority of our party as I believe—I would say, do not hesitate to do what is plainly your duty. It is not the part of true men to falter and hesitate for fear of consequences; their part is to do the right, never doubting that the consequences of right action must be good. Do not fear for Liberal principles, nor doubt that in good time the party organization and the party leaders will come to carry forward these principles and to lift the banner of Liberalism from the mire in which faithless and treacherous leaders have trampled it. No great and just cause was ever finally lost because leaders proved false, and if we of the rank and file only prove true, and refuse to wink at or condone the treachery of our leaders we need have no fear and no doubt of the ultimate triumph of Liberalism in Canada.

Yours sincerely,

H. H. COOK.